

What is claimed is:

1. A method for deploying software, comprising the steps of:

5 providing a Web site on a server coupled to a network for presenting a user with an interface, wherein the server has an array of pre-built, post-load images stored thereon for combinations of the software and hardware that the user may select;

receiving from the user a selection of software applications for deploying to a target computer system;

10 receiving from the user a selection of hardware for the target system and responsively determining what drivers correspond to the indicated hardware; and

selecting a certain one of the post-load images, wherein the selected image has the software applications selected by the user and the drivers for the hardware selected by the user.

15 2. The method of claim 1, comprising the steps of:

receiving a first order from the user for the certain image of the selected software applications deployable to the target system hardware, including a selection by the user of a method for delivery of the selected image; and

20 sending the user a loading utility with the selected image, wherein such a loading utility enables transferring the post-load image to the computer system without relying on the computer system having an operating system shell or boot diskette.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the sending of the loading utility with the selected image includes sending the loading utility on bootable media, and wherein the utility includes

instructions for causing the target system to transfer the image to a hard drive of the system responsive to the target system booting to the utility on the bootable media when the target system is turned on.

5 4. The method of claim 2, comprising the steps of:

maintaining a record of the order for the software applications and drivers included in the certain image that is sent, wherein the record is associated with an order identifier and user identifier;

receiving a second order for the user, including the user or order identifier;

10 retrieving the record for the first order responsive to the user or order identifier;

presenting a list of the software applications and drivers included in the certain image that was sent for the first order; and

receiving a selection indicating ones of the software programs of the first order to update for the second order or indicating software programs for the second order in addition to those of

15 the first order.

5. The method of claim 4, comprising the step of:

presenting, responsive to the user or order identifier, a list of suggested updates for the software programs of the first order.

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6. The method of claim 4, comprising the step of:

presenting, responsive to the user or order identifier, a list of suggested software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.

5 7. The method of claim 4, comprising the step of:

receiving user information that informs the server about the user's needs;

maintaining a profile of the user that is associated with the user identifier and the received user information; and

presenting, responsive to the user information, a list of suggested updates for the software

10 programs of the first order or a list of suggested software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.

8. An apparatus for deploying software, comprising:

a processor;

a memory for storing program instructions executable by the processor to perform the steps of:

5 providing a Web site on a server coupled to a network for presenting a user with an interface;

 receiving from the user a selection of software applications for deploying to a target computer system;

 receiving from the user a selection of hardware for the target system and
10 responsively determining what drivers correspond to the indicated hardware, wherein the server has a pre-built array of software images stored thereon for combinations of the software and hardware that the user may select; and

 selecting a certain one of the pre-built images, wherein the selected image has the software applications selected by the user and the drivers for the hardware
15 selected by the user.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the program instructions are executable by the processor to perform the steps of:

 receiving a first order from the user for the certain image of the selected
20 software applications deployable to the target system hardware, including a selection by the user of a method for delivery of the selected image; and

sending the user a loading utility with the selected image, wherein such a loading utility enables transferring the image to the computer system without relying on the computer system having an operating system shell or boot diskette.

5 10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the sending of the loading utility with the selected image includes sending the loading utility on bootable media, and wherein the utility includes instructions for causing the target system to transfer the image to a hard drive of the system responsive to the target system booting to the utility on the bootable media when the target system is turned on.

10 11. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the program instructions are executable by the processor to perform the steps of:

maintaining a record of the order for the software applications and drivers included in the certain image that is sent, wherein the record is associated with an order identifier and user identifier;

15 receiving a second order for the user, including the user or order identifier; retrieving the record for the first order responsive to the user or order identifier;

presenting a list of the software applications and drivers included in the certain image that was sent for the first order; and

20 receiving a selection indicating ones of the software programs of the first order to update for the second order or indicating software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the program instructions are executable by the processor to perform the step of:

presenting, responsive to the user or order identifier, a list of suggested updates for the software programs of the first order.

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13. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the program instructions are executable by the processor to perform the step of:

presenting, responsive to the user or order identifier, a list of suggested software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.

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14. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the program instructions are executable by the processor to perform the steps of:

receiving user information that informs the server about the user's needs;

maintaining a profile of the user that is associated with the user identifier and the

15 received user information; and

presenting, responsive to the user information, a list of suggested updates for the software programs of the first order or a list of suggested software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.

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15. A computer program product for deploying software, comprising:

instructions for providing a Web site on a server coupled to a network for presenting a user with an interface;

instructions for receiving from the user a selection of software applications for deploying

5 to a target computer system;

instructions for receiving from the user a selection of hardware for the target system and responsively determining what drivers correspond to the indicated hardware, wherein the server has a pre-built array of software images stored thereon for combinations of the software and hardware that the user may select; and

10 instructions for selecting a certain one of the pre-built images, wherein the selected image has the software applications selected by the user and the drivers for the hardware selected by the user.

16. The computer program product of claim 15, comprising:

15 instructions for receiving a first order from the user for the certain image of the selected software applications deployable to the target system hardware, including a selection by the user of a method for delivery of the selected image; and

instructions for sending the user a loading utility with the selected image, wherein such a loading utility enables transferring the image to the computer system without relying on the

20 computer system having an operating system shell or boot diskette.

17. The computer program product of claim 16, wherein the sending of the loading utility with the selected image includes sending the loading utility on bootable media, and

wherein the utility includes instructions for causing the target system to transfer the image to a hard drive of the system responsive to the target system booting to the utility on the bootable media when the target system is turned on.

5 18. The computer program product of claim 16, comprising:

instructions for maintaining a record of the order for the software applications and drivers included in the certain image that is sent, wherein the record is associated with an order identifier and user identifier;

instructions for receiving a second order for the user, including the user or order
10 identifier;

instructions for retrieving the record for the first order responsive to the user or order identifier;

instructions for presenting a list of the software applications and drivers included in the certain image that was sent for the first order; and

15 instructions for receiving a selection indicating ones of the software programs of the first order to update for the second order or indicating software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.

19. The computer program product of claim 18, comprising:

20 instructions for presenting, responsive to the user or order identifier, a list of suggested updates for the software programs of the first order.

20. The computer program product of claim 18, comprising:

instructions for presenting, responsive to the user or order identifier, a list of suggested software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.

5 21. The computer program product of claim 18, comprising:

instructions for receiving user information that informs the server about the user's needs;

instructions for maintaining a profile of the user that is associated with the user identifier and the received user information; and

instructions for presenting, responsive to the user information, a list of suggested updates

10 for the software programs of the first order or a list of suggested software programs for the second order in addition to those of the first order.